

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of conducting an auction ~~in a least two rounds~~, comprising:

defining, prior to a first auction, creating a rule for a second auction round based at least in part on user input, the rule limiting participation of bidders in the second auction round based on an occurrence in [[a]] the first auction round;

conducting the first auction round having a first set of bidders;

designating one or more bidders in the first set of bidders as winners of the first auction;

determining participation of bidders from the first set of bidders in the second auction round, in accordance with an application of the rule ~~to the occurrence in the first auction round;~~
[[and]]

conducting the second auction round based on the determined participation; and

designating one or more bidders in the second auction as winners of the second auction;

wherein if the first auction is a forward auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a seller seeks to sell; and

wherein if the first auction is a reverse auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a buyer seeks to buy.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the occurrence includes an outcome of the first auction round.

3. (cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the rule includes selecting at least two leading bidders from the first auction ~~round~~.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the rule includes permitting only the at least two leading bidders to participate in the second auction ~~round~~.

6. (cancelled)

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[6]]~~ 1, wherein the rule includes not permitting the one or more winners of the first auction ~~winning bidder~~ to participate in the second auction ~~round~~.

8. (cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the bidders are electronically coupled to an auction coordinator during the conducting of the first and second auction ~~rounds~~.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the bidders submit bids to the auction coordinator online during the conducting of the first and second auctions ~~rounds~~.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the bidders participate in a sealed bid in the first auction ~~round~~ and are electronically coupled to an auction coordinator online during the second auction ~~round~~.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders bidding less than a predetermined amount to participate in the second auction ~~round~~.

15. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of conducting an auction ~~in at least two rounds~~, comprising:

~~determining that a bidder may participate in a second auction round if that bidder has not been awarded a contract in a first auction round;~~

conducting a [[the]] first auction among a plurality of bidders ~~round~~;

awarding a contract to one or more winners of a bidder ~~in the first auction round~~; and

conducting a [[the]] second auction ~~round~~ among a set of bidders that including only includes those bidders that were not awarded a contract in the first auction ~~round~~;

wherein if the first auction is a forward auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a seller seeks to sell; and

wherein if the first auction is a reverse auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a buyer seeks to buy.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, further comprising soliciting potential bidders.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein soliciting potential bidders includes:

preparing a request for quotation;

providing the request for quotation to potential bidders; and

requesting that potential bidders respond to the request for quotation.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said request for quotation includes an identification of goods to be purchased.

19. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein said request for quotation includes an identification of services to be purchased.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

awarding a contract to one or more winners of a bidder ~~in the second auction round~~; and

conducting a third auction among a set of bidders that including only includes those bidders that were not awarded a contract in the first auction ~~round~~ and bidders that were not awarded a contract in the second auction ~~round~~.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the rule includes ~~A computer-implemented method of conducting an auction in at least two rounds, comprising:~~

determining that a particular bidder may participate in ~~[[a]] the~~ second auction ~~round~~ if ~~[[the]]~~ that bidder is a leading bidder in a first auction ~~round~~;

~~conducting the first auction round which includes a plurality of bidders;~~

~~designating one or more of the plurality of bidders as non-leading bidders in accordance with the conducting of the first auction round; and~~

~~conducting the second auction round that excludes the non-leading bidders from the first auction round.~~

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising conducting a third auction ~~round~~ including only leading bidders in the first ~~round~~ auction.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, further comprising conducting a third auction ~~round~~ including only leading bidders in the second ~~round~~ auction.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21, wherein a plurality of bidders may participate in a subsequent auction ~~round~~.

25. (Currently amended) A system for conducting an auction ~~in rounds~~, comprising:

a sponsor processor;

a first bidder processor communicating with said sponsor processor; and

a second bidder processor communicating with said sponsor processor;

wherein said sponsor processor contains instructions which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to:

conduct a first auction ~~round~~ having a first set of bidders;

designate one or more bidders in the first set of bidders as winners of the first auction;

apply a rule to an occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~, the rule limiting participation of bidders in a second auction ~~round~~ based on the occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~;

determine~~ing~~ participation of bidders from the first set of bidders in the second auction ~~round~~, in accordance with an application of the rule ~~to the occurrence in the first auction round~~; ~~and~~

conduct the second auction ~~round~~ based on the determined participation; and

designate one or more winners of the second auction;

wherein if the first auction is a forward auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a seller seeks to sell; and

wherein if the first auction is a reverse auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a buyer seeks to buy.

26. (original) The system of claim 25, wherein said first bidder processor and said second bidder processor communicate through an auction coordinator during the first and second auctions ~~rounds~~.

27. (original) The system of claim 25, wherein said first bidder processor and said second bidder processor communicate through the Internet during the first and second auctions ~~rounds~~.

28. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

conduct a first auction ~~round~~ having a first set of bidders;

apply a rule to an occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~, the rule limiting participation of bidders in a second auction ~~round~~ based on the occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~; and

conduct the second auction ~~round~~ based on the determined participation;

wherein if the first auction is a forward auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a seller seeks to sell; and

wherein if the first auction is a reverse auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a buyer seeks to buy.

29. (Currently amended) A bidding device operated by a bidder during an online auction, said bidding device comprising software that enables the bidder to submit bids to a sponsor processor during a first auction ~~round~~;

wherein the sponsor processor applies a rule to an occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~, the rule limiting participation of bidders in a second auction ~~round~~ based on the occurrence in the first auction ~~round~~; and

wherein the bidding device is selectively enabled to determine participation of the bidder in the second auction ~~round~~ in accordance with an application of the rule ~~to the occurrence in the first auction round~~, and to allow the bidder to submit bids to the sponsor processor in the second auction ~~round~~ based on the determined participation;

wherein if the first auction is a forward auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a seller seeks to sell; and

wherein if the first auction is a reverse auction, that which is auctioned in the first and second auctions represents a first portion and a second portion, respectively, of what a buyer seeks to buy.

30. (Currently amended) The bidding device of claim 29, wherein the bidding is enabled to allow the bidder to submit bids to the sponsor processor in the second auction ~~round~~ only if the bidder has not been awarded a contract in the first auction ~~round~~.

31. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders bidding less than a predetermined amount to participate in the second auction.

32. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders bidding more than a predetermined amount to participate in the second auction.

33. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders having best bids that fall within a certain range to participate in the second auction.

34. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders designated as top bidders to participate in the second auction.

35. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the rule includes permitting only bidders having a desirable geographic location to participate in the second auction.